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26 June 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM: DDI Working Group on TWA Hijacking

SUBJECT: Iranian Involvement With Terrorism in Lebanon

The Iranian Government is now trying to exploit the hostage situation, even though it does not appear to have been involved in planning or carrying out the hijacking. An overwhelming body of evidence, however, has implicated Iran in the Hizballah campaign of violence against Americans and other Westerners in Lebanon during the past two years. Iran provides substantial material and political support to the Lebanese radical Shias, but it does not control or have advance knowledge of all of their operations. Senior Iranian clerics and Foreign Ministry officials are involved in supporting terrorism in Lebanon.

Iran and the TWA Hijacking

Iranian officials are now clearly encouraging the Hizballah to prolong the hostage situation, but we do not believe that Iran was involved in planning or carrying out the TWA hijacking

Available evidence still suggests that the original hijackers were part of a small group of disgruntled Shias from southern Lebanon acting more or less independently of any larger organization or government. The Greek interrogation of the third hijacker and the general behavior and demands of the original team tend to support this conclusion.

Iranian officials became involved, however, after Hizballah elements seized a small number of the Americans during their second stop at Beirut airport.

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The Iranian Government maintains an intimate relationship with the Lebanese Shia fundamentalist groups that comprise the Hizballah network. Iran has greatly strengthened the Hizballah during the past two years by providing money, weapons, logistical support, training, and political and religious indoctrination. The Iranian Ambassador in Damascus and the Revolutionary Guard Commander in the Bekaa Valley work closely with the Council of Lebanon, the Iranian-created committee of Lebanese radical Shia leaders that tries to coordinate all fundamentalist activities in Lebanon.

Hizballah leaders have also worked in collusion with Iran on some terrorist operations. The Revolutionary Guards based in the Bekaa Valley are often colocated with Hizballah elements and share the same communications and support network.

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Despite Iranian efforts, however, the Hizballah remains largely a domestic Lebanese political movement with its own political agenda. While Iranian assistance may have been critical in 1982 and 1983, the Hizballah movement does not depend on Iran for its existence. Shia fundamentalism, whetted by decades of of Shia deprivation and a brutal Israeli occupation, has firmly taken root in Lebanon and has achieved a momentum of its own. Hizballah elements can and often do conduct many of their activities without Iranian foreknowledge.

Hizballah terrorism is driven by the movement's internal goals. Lebanese Shia fundamentalists do not target Western officials primarily because Iran has ordered them to do so. Hizballah and Iranian cooperation on anti-Western terrorism arises from the shared belief that the first step in an Islamic revolution is the elimination of Western influence from Lebanon. Hizballah leaders share with Iran the ultimate objective of establishing an Islamic state in Lebanon and are therefore often receptive to Iranian encouragement and recommendations. Certain Hizballah elements, however, are also motivated by other concerns, such as a desire to free their Lebanese coreligionists in prison for terrorism in Kuwait and elsewhere.

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The Lebanese Hizballah movement has grown increasingly independent as it has expanded in terms of membership and resources. Hizballah leaders are now serious competitors for the leadership of Lebanon's large Shia population and command the loyalty of perhaps as many as several thousand armed fighters. There is mounting evidence that the Lebanese Shias---although respectful of Khomeini and the Iranian revolution---will no longer tolerate Iranian attempts to dictate their policies. Heavyhanded Iranian behavior and the competition between rival elements within the Iranian Government have also annoyed leaders of the Lebanese Hizballah.

In summary, the Hizballah network has become an autonomous terrorist problem in its own right. Iran supports and advises the Hizballah but cannot control it. It is no longer safe to assume that Iranian officials know in advance about all Hizballah operations.

Iranian Involvement in Past Terrorism

While Iran does not appear to be responsible for the current hijacking, there is considerable evidence of Iranian support for past terrorism in Lebanon. Circumstantial evidence indicates that the bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut in April 1983 was the work of pro-Iranian Lebanese Shias [REDACTED]

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The "Islamic Jihad Organization," which claimed responsibility for the bombing of the Embassy was probably an Iranian-supported Lebanese Shia group.

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- The Jihad Organization had claimed responsibility for the attack in March on the US Marines assigned to the multinational peacekeeping force. It also said it carried out at least one other attack against the French contingent of the multinational force.

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Evidence also pointed to Iranian-backed Lebanese Shias as perpetrators of the bombing of the US and French Multinational Force contingents in Lebanon during October 1983.

- [REDACTED] members of the Shia Musawi family, associated with several pro-Iranian Shia splinter groups, were primarily responsible for the attacks.

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- [REDACTED] several pickup trucks of the type used in the attacks were seen parked in front of a Musawi office in Beirut.

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- The Musawis are involved with the Islamic Amal group based in the Bekaa Valley and with the Husayni Suicide Forces based in southern Beirut.

[REDACTED] approximately 10 minutes after the bombings occurred, all of the officials of an Iranian Embassy office in West Beirut departed hastily by car. This Iranian office is believed to have engaged exclusively in intelligence activities.

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- It is unlikely they could have been prepared to depart so quickly without prior knowledge of the attack.
- A high-ranking Iranian official stated publicly after the bombings that "the Muslim people" in Lebanon had acted in accordance with Khomeini's principles of revolution and that he hoped the US and France had "learned their lesson."

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We also suspect Iran was involved in the bombing of the US Embassy Annex in East Beirut in September 1984, but we have less specific evidence in this case.

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Iranian Policy Regarding Terrorism

Tehran's support for terrorism stems primarily from the perception of the Khomeini regime that it has a religious duty to export its Islamic revolution and to wage, by whatever means necessary, a constant struggle against the non-Islamic world, particularly the US. Tehran's aim is to eliminate Western influence, overthrow pro-Western regimes, and establish Islamic republics. Iranian leaders--both clerics and laymen--are convinced of the righteousness of Khomeini's brand of Islamic

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fundamentalism and believe that other Muslim societies would benefit from it. This religious motivation provides Iranian leaders with a moral justification for the use of terrorism.

Iranian leaders are divided between Islamic radicals and pragmatists who both support the use of terrorism--although for different reasons--and conservatives and moderates who generally oppose it. Islamic radicals, such as Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikholeslam, a leader of the students who seized the US Embassy in Tehran, and Majid Kamal, who directs intelligence activities from an office in the Foreign Ministry, are major advocates of terrorism as a legitimate tool of state policy. In their view, the fusion of politics and religion justifies any means to export the revolution. Moreover, radical clerics in Qom who may hold no official position within the regime have independent sources of income and are able to finance and support terrorist operations without government approval.

Pragmatists--such as President Khamenei, Assembly Speaker Rafsanjani, and Ayatollah Montazeri--are willing to support whatever policies, including terrorism, that are likely to further Iranian interests. Each has been linked to the funding and support of Iranian-backed terrorist groups. They support terrorism because it can be a highly effective instrument of policy, but they also recognize the need for improved state-to-state economic relations and have sought to curb radical excesses. The pragmatists prefer to use terrorism selectively, choosing targets important to Iranian national interests rather than purely revolutionary goals.

Iranian policy on terrorism is now caught up in the internal power struggle among radicals, pragmatists, and conservatives as Iran moves toward the post-Khomeini era. So long as Iranian pragmatists perceive little cost in supporting terrorist operations, the Khomeini regime will continue its deep involvement in terrorism. Moreover, the US will remain a high-priority target for Iranian terrorism barring the unlikely accession of a conservative coalition.

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Chronology of attacks by Iranian-backed groups in Lebanon

14 June 1985 TWA Flight 847 hijacked from Athens to Beirut. Hizballah elements involved in holding US hostages are encouraged by Iranian officials to prolong incident.

9 June 1985 American University of Beirut official Thomas Sutherland kidnaped in West Beirut. Radical Shias with links to Iran suspected.

29 May 1985 Denis Hill, British professor at American University of Beirut shot to death. Islamic Jihad first claimed credit and then denied responsibility. Pro-Iranian radical Shias are still suspected.

28 May 1985 David Jacobsen, US Director of American University Hospital, kidnaped. Islamic Jihad claimed credit.

23 May 1985 Two Frenchmen, journalist Jean-Paul Kaufmann and researcher Michel Saurat, kidnaped while leaving Beirut International Airport. Islamic Jihad claimed credit.

29 April 1985 French journalist Norbert Balit escaped from a kidnaping attempt. Pro-Iranian radical Shias are the most likely suspects.

18 April 1985 Georges Sayegh, Lebanese citizen and Vice President of American University of Beirut, kidnaped and interrogated about personnel working at the university. Radical Shias are suspected.

28 March 1985 Two French teachers, Jean Claude Duvent and Robert Valnassian, apparently mistaken for Americans, kidnaped and released. Perpetrators probably were Shia elements hoping to provide Americans to pro-Iranian groups seeking additional US hostages.

22 March 1985 French diplomat Marcel Fontaine kidnaped in West Beirut. Islamic Jihad claimed credit.

16 March 1985 Terry Anderson, US bureau chief for Associated Press news service, kidnaped in West Beirut. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

15 March 1985 British businessman Brian Levick kidnaped by

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"Khaybar Brigades." Released because he is not American.

14 March 1985 British metallurgist Geoffrey Nash kidnaped in West Beirut by "Khaybar Brigades." Released because he is not American.

14 March 1985 Dutch priest Nicholas Kluiters disappeared in Bekaa Valley and was later found dead. Hizballah elements possibly involved.

19 February 1985 French observer killed in West Beirut. Radical Shias with links to Iran suspected.

22 January 1985 Bomb exploded on street in front of American University Hospital. Radical Shias suspected.

19 January 1985 Bomb exploded near Iraqi bank. Radical Shias with links to Iran suspected.

14 January 1985 Two French observers shot dead in West Beirut. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

13 January 1985 Bomb defused at home of FSN employee of US Embassy. Radical Shias suspected.

8 January 1985 Father Lawrence Jenco, US Citizen, director of Catholic Relief Services, kidnaped. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

7 January 1985 French observer killed. Reporting indicated pro-Iranian Shias responsible.

30 November 1984 Peter Kilburn, US librarian at American University, kidnaped. Islamic Jihad claimed credit. Hizballah elements believed to be holding him.

20 September 1984 Truck bomb exploded in front of US Embassy Annex in Beirut. Two US personnel killed, 20 wounded along with 12 Lebanese killed and over 50 wounded. Islamic Jihad claimed credit.

24 August 1984 British consular office in Beirut suffered extensive damage from rocket attack. Radical Shia elements are the most likely suspects.

24 August 1984 Saudi Embassy in Beirut sacked by radical Shias unable to obtain visas for the Hajj. Attack claimed by Islamic Jihad.

2 July 1984 Bomb caused extensive damage to Beirut office of L'Orient Le Jour newspaper. Radical Shia elements are the most likely suspects.

25 June 1984 French embassy car blown up. Radical Shias suspected.

9 June 1984 Two car bombs exploded in Christian town of Juniyah, killing at least two and wounding scores. Shia driver identified.

6-7 June 1984 Saudi Embassy in Beirut attacked twice. Islamic Jihad claims credit.

6 June 1984 One French observer killed, two wounded by sniper fire by Hizballah elements.

8 May 1984 American Presbyterian Minister, Benjamin Weir, kidnaped by Hizballah elements.

5 May 1984 Soviet cultural center hit by rocket. "Forces of the Islamic Dawn" claimed credit. Radical Shia elements showing support for the Afghan resistance are suspected.

16 April 1984 French doctor in observer group wounded by gunmen firing from a passing car.

28 March 1984 French officer in observer group killed by probable radical Shia gunmen firing from a passing car.

27 March 1984 French cultural attache shot four times while walking to work in Beirut. Pro-Iranian Shias suspected.

22 March 1984 British Council building in Beirut damaged by bomb. Radical Shia are the most likely suspects.

16 March 1984 US Political Officer, William Buckley, kidnaped by Hizballah elements.

7 March 1984 American journalist, Jeremy Levin, kidnapped by Hizballah elements.

6 March 1984 Islamic Jihad claimed credit for three attacks on French facilities following visit by Foreign Minister Cheysson to Beirut. One Frenchman killed.

15 February 1984 Christian Joubert, French architect, kidnaped by Hizballah elements. Rescued on 15 April.

10 February 1984 Dr. Frank Regeir, American professor at American University in Beirut, kidnaped by Hizballah elements. Rescued on 15 April 1984.

18 January 1984 Dr. Malcolm Kerr, President of American University in Beirut, murdered. Islamic Jihad claimed credit.

17 January 1984 Saudi Consul Hussein Farrash kidnaped by Hizballah elements. Released in May 1985.

13 January 1984 French diplomat's wife wounded by two men on motorcycle. Radical Shias suspected.

27 December 1983 Car bomb attack on British multinational force convoy. Radical Shia elements are suspected.

21 December 1983 Bar frequented by US Marines bombed. Islamic Jihad claimed credit.

21 December 1983 Truck bomb attack against French Multinational Force headquarters. Ten killed, 125 wounded. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

23 October 1983 French Multinational Force barracks hit by car bomb which kills 56 troops. Islamic Jihad claimed credit.

23 October 1983 Car bombing of US Marines barracks; 239 killed. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

19 October 1983 US Marine supply convoy car bombed. Islamic Jihad claimed credit.

16 October 1983 One US Marine killed and three wounded in sniper attack on US Multinational Force elements. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

6 August 1983 French Ambassador's home attacked. Islamic Jihad claimed credit.

5 August 1983 French Embassy hit by rocket-propelled grenades. Islamic Jihad claimed credit.

21 July 1983 Dr. David Dodge, president of American University in Beirut kidnaped on 19 July 1982 by Hizballah elements, was released in good health through Syrian intervention. During his detention he was taken to Iran.

July 1983 Several rocket-propelled grenade attacks on US Multinational Force barracks at Beirut International Airport. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

July 1983 Islamic Jihad claimed credit for several grenade attacks on French Multinational Force elements.

18 April 1983 Car bomb attack on US Embassy in West Beirut killed 57 and wounded more than 100. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

8 April 1983 Two rocket-propelled grenades fired at French Multinational Force elements. Islamic Jihad claimed credit.

16 March 1983 Five US Marines wounded in a grenade attack near the airport. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.